

Service: Bible Study**STUDY of challenges & opportunities to serve - Matthew 25 vv. 35 – 40**

This passage is about being alongside people and attending to their needs.

Q. How have others served you in times of need ?

Q. What opportunities have you come across that could involve your help ?

Q. How do we respond to those on our streets who are begging, or homeless or selling Big Issue ? How can we demonstrate God's love for them ?

Watch this video clip, which is a real social experiment on people's reactions to a man [an actor] lying on the pavement, first of all as a possibly homeless person and then as a man in a suit. The responses are real – just as they happened.

<https://youtu.be/iPehw67L91w>

Discuss your reaction to the video clip and the issues it raises.

Matthew 25 vv. 37 - 39

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

Share in small groups what opportunities have come your way to demonstrate God's love and share your faith.

Sometimes small things can have a big impact on people. A lonely person can feel valued just because someone stopped and talked to them. God oversees our conversations and contacts with people, so we need to commit each day to the Lord and ask that we be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. We will have encounters we did not expect!

An unexpected meeting :

I spoke to a man passing my front gate who was walking with the aid of crutches. My casual enquiry as to how long before he would be free to walk without such aids, led to an outpouring of how he had been racially attacked 10 years ago, had his head kicked in and spine damaged and had subsequently struggled for years with his mobility and his spatial awareness which led to him getting lost when he went out. Our conversation included ideas as how to meet his current frustrations which had depressed him, and I offered to pray for him. The result of that “chance” encounter was he said that his ‘faith in humanity had been restored through a kind conversation’.

Questions :

Q. Was this really a “chance” meeting ? Why ? Why not?

Q. What do you suggest is the next move ?

Q. What experiences have you come across of ‘chance’ meetings which meet a need which at the time was unknown ?

There are many non-church people who would value prayer for someone or some situation. Q. How could you, as a church, discover what those prayer needs are ?

Q. What schemes have you come across in which Christians could play a part ?

Some churches have been involved in - Food banks; Financial advice; Parenting classes/ Language classes ; visiting homes for the elderly; helping an under-resourced struggling local Primary school; refugees and asylum seekers; disabled people; the lonely; Street Pastors etc..

Q. What other examples do you know?

Q. How do these activities demonstrate the love of Christ ?

Q. Are these activities channels for the proclamation of the Gospel ?

Q. If so in what way?

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